1; Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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ETHNOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF THE MISKITO AND SUMU INDIANS OF HONDURAS AND NICARAGUA

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INTRODUCTION

131 The Miskito and Sumu inhabit the Atlantic side of Honduras and Nicaragua, from Rio Tinto or Black River (lat. 15° 50′ N.) to Rio Punta Gorda (lat. 11° 30′ N.). While the Miskito are found chiefly along the coast the Sumu are an inland tribe and extend westward within a short distance from the settlements of the Spanish-speaking population.

Together these two tribes occupy the larger part of the vast region generally known by the name of Mosquito Coast. This territory reaches from Cabo Honduras, near Trujillo, to Rio San Juan, at the Costa Rica boundary; that is, from the eleventh to the sixteenth degree north, an extension of about 550 miles by sea. From Cabo Honduras the coast runs at first in an easterly direction, then southeast as far as Cabo Gracias a Dios, whence it extends nearly due south.

103 Columbus, who discovered the country in 1502, gave the name *Costa de Orejas* "Coast of the Ears" to that part situated to the west of Cabo Gracias a Dios. The southern district of the Mosquito Coast became known in those days as *Cariay* or *Cariari*, *Veragua* or *Beragua*, *Castilla del Oro* "Golden Castile." These names were superseded by the Spanish-Mexican terms *Taguzgalpa* and *Tologalpa*, which stuck practically throughout the colonial period.

The name "Mosquito Coast" (Mosquito Territory or Mosquito Shore), employed by the English, has been taken from that of the principal Indian tribe, the Miskito, erroneously called Mosquito; the Spaniards translated it into *Mosquitia* and *Costa de Mosquitos* (*Costa Mosquita*). Many believe that this name has arisen from the numerous mosquitoes to be found in the country, while others think that the small islands off the coast, "which lie as thick as mosquitoes," may have caused the appellation.

133 Orography.—The shore of the Mosquito Coast is partly alluvial and partly coralline; to the south of Cabo Gracias a Dios the land is gaining on the sea, but to the north of that cape the reverse appears to be the case.

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The Miskito readily intermarry with foreigners. They assimilate all races; the children always speak the language of the mother and grow up as Miskito, whether the father be "Creole," "Ladino," Carib, Negro, Sumu, Rama, Paya, North American, European, Syrian, or Chinaman. The villages between Wounta and Rio Hueso show this phenomenon to perfection. (Heath, a: 50.) Consequently the pure Indian tribes, as the Sumu, Paya, and Rama, are rapidly diminishing in numbers, whereas the Miskito, owing to the influx of fresh blood, are holding their own.

In spite of the fact that the Miskito have been since the seventeenth century in contact with buccaneers, British traders, and settlers, mahogany cutters, rubber bleeders, and Moravian missionaries, they have not changed considerably in their mode of life. Their tribal name appears first in the works of the piratical sea rovers, the English calling them generally "Moskite" and "Moskito," and the French "Moustique" and "Moustiquais."

Exquemelin (Engl. ed.: 250; French ed.: II, 264–265) calculates the number of the Miskito at about 1,500 to 1,700, including 200 Negro slaves. In those days they were divided into two subtribes having but little relation with each other. One of them lived at Cabo Gracias a Dios, the other at Moustique (=Sandy Bay?). The Indians from this latter place occasionally accompanied the buccaneer vessels, the others being less courageous on the sea. Dampier states, however, that the whole tribes comprised less than 100 men (Dampier: I, 7). Raveneau de Lussan (437–438), who writes about the same time, says that the Miskito of Cabo Gracias a Dios and lower Rio Coco were largely mixed with Negroes, while those at Sandy Bay were still pure Indians. In 1699 the Miskito occupied the seacoast from Cabo Camarón in Honduras to about 57 miles south of Brangmans River (=Wawa River?), where the territory of the Sumu began. The coast line of their territory had an extension of about 285 miles; they had, besides, two settlements on the lower Rio Coco (M. W.: 299). From the details given by the latter author the total population of this tribe numbered close to 1,000. In 1725 the Miskito numbered about 2,000 men altogether and were ruled by three chiefs (Lade). Bell (a: 250), who lived many years in the country, estimated the total Indian population of that territory at about 10,000 to 15,000, of which the Miskito numbered nearly one-half. The present writer calculates the total number of this tribe at about 15,000, of which at least one-third live on both banks of Rio Coco as far up as Rio Bocay, that is, 275 to 300 miles from the sea. In the Republic of Honduras, from Rio Coco to Rio Tinto, may be found from 3,000 to 4,000 Miskito, who inhabit the seashore and lagoons as well as the lower Rio Patuca. The remainder of this tribe lives in Nicaragua, from Rio Coco to Pearl Lagoon.

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In spite of the distribution of the Miskito over so vast a territory, the dialectical variations of their language are comparatively insignificant. Five dialects have been observed by the writer (vide Conzemius, d: 59–64). A small part of the Miskito has kept aloof from admixture with the Negro; these are called *Tāwira* "Heavy-haired."[2] Lehmann (c: I, 105, 107, 464) attempts to connect the ancient Chuchures of Panama with the Miskito, but this theory is barely acceptable. These Chuchures are said to have arrived in canoes from Honduras, and they settled in the neighborhood of Nombre de Dios. But their number gradually declined owing to disease and they finally disappeared altogether.

Many corrupted English words have passed into the speech of the Miskito, while words borrowed from Spanish are much less common. In certain regions, especially on the upper Rio Coco, a large number of Sumu words have been incorporated in the language.

GENERAL REMARKS ON THE SUMU

Inland from the Miskito, from Rio Patuca to Rio Punta Gorda, live the more primitive Sumu, who speak a related language. They inhabit chiefly the headwaters of the larger rivers or the affluents thereof. Owing to close intermarriage and lack of hygienic living conditions they are rapidly diminishing in numbers, and the day of their complete disappearance or absorption by the Miskito does not seem far off. Their total number is estimated at about 3,000 to 3,500.

The Sumu are split into different subtribes speaking various dialects which are almost mutually intelligible. These are known by the names *Twahka*, *Ulwa*, *Panamaka*, *Bawihka*, and *Kukra* (vide Conzemius, d: 64–73). The three first named of these subtribes number about 1,000 each, the Bawihka not more than 150, while the Kukra are practically extinct.

The Twahka inhabit the northern section of the Sumu territory and are found on the rivers Patuca (Guampú), Coco (Lakus and lower Waspuk), Wawa and Kukallaya. The Panamaka live on Rio Coco (Bocay and upper Waspuk) and on Rio Prinsapolca, while

[2] For the pronunciation of the Indian words the following phonetic system has been used:

a, e, i, o, u, correspond to the sounds of these vowels in German or Spanish.
ai as ai in "aisle."
au as ou in "how."
oi as oi in "boil."
ŋ as ng in "sing."
x as Spanish j or German ch in "ach" or Scotch ch in "loch."
y is always a consonant.
Nasalization of vowels is indicated by the tilde (~) as in Portuguese.
All the other letters have approximately the same value as in English.

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the Ulwa inhabit the southern section of the territory in consideration, from Rio Grande to Rio Punta Gorda. 101 131

The Bawihka are limited to Rio Banbana, a large northern affluent of the lower Prinsapolca. The Miskito call them generally *Sumu-sirpi* "small Sumu" or by the misleading name *Twahka*, but among all the Sumu they are known as "Bawihka." This latter name is not mentioned by Lehmann, the latest investigator into the languages of Central America. The Bawihka were formerly also found on the Wawa and Kukallaya, but they were expelled from these regions by the Twahka, and then settled on Rio Banbana. Most of them are living at the village Wasakin (*was-sa-kin*), "Rocks of the black water."

The Kukra formerly occupied the coast and shores of the lagoons from Rio Grande to the southern extremity of Bluefields Lagoon. They have always refused all intercourse with the Miskito and the foreigners, but occasionally communicated with the neighboring Ulwa for trading purposes. Toward the middle of the nineteenth century some rubber cutters ventured into their territory, and at Kukra Hill, northwest of Bluefields, they captured a few Indians who wore nothing but a loincloth of white tunu and a collar of shells and animal teeth. They were taken to Bluefields, but died soon afterwards. After this incursion into their country the remaining Indians went inland to the Rio Siquia, where they apparently became absorbed by their kindred, the Ulwa. At Pearl Lagoon may be met a few Miskito who are mixed with Kukra.

Other Sumu subtribes, which are already extinct now, are the *Yusku* (*Yosko*), *Prinsu*, *Boa*, *Silam*, and *Ku*. The Yusku lived on the rivers Tuma and Bocay; they are said to have been very bad and were exterminated by the other Sumu in the course of prolonged wars. The Prinsu lived on Rio Prinsapolca, which owes its name to them. They intermarried with the Miskito and the offspring became known as *Tusila* or *Tongula* who formed a separate tribe speaking a corrupted Miskito but retained many Sumu customs. The Boa lived on the headwaters of Rio Grande, while the Silam and Ku lived along the Waspuk River.

The Spanish historians of the sixteenth century included the Sumu under the general term "Chontal" or "Chondal," a Mexican word which means merely "stranger," "foreigner," and was applied by the Nahuatl to any primitive tribe. In later documents the Sumu are mentioned as "Caribes," "Chatos," "Albatuinas" (from the Miskito *Albawina*) and by a number of other names. To-day the whole group is generally known by the Miskito designations "Sumu" or "Smu," which have already been used by Bell and Wickham. Some writers have mentioned the whole group under the names Twahka and Ulwa, which, properly speaking, should be 101